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Galesburg,  
May 17, 1898.

J. M. G. Carter, M. D.,  
Waukegan, Ill.

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## THE PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS.

### "Advances in the Domain of Preventive Medicine."

BY J. M. G. CARTER, M. A., M. D., SC. D., PH. D., WAUKEGAN.

*Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen :*

Standing at the close of the nineteenth century, it seems very appropriate that we should reflect upon the victories which have been won in the field of medicine, the foundations which have been laid for higher, better and nobler work in the future, and the character of that future work which lies especially in the domain of preventive medicine.

The smallpox scourge of the last century yielded a death harvest of 500,000 people annually. In many cities almost every individual had the disease. It is as rare *now* to meet a person who has *had* variola as it was then to see one who had *not* been affected by that disease. The advances in preventive medicine which reduced the dreadful mortality of that affection are truly wonderful.

However, the growth of medicine during these years cannot be limited by the banishment of smallpox. Other diseases have yielded to its advance. Cholera and yellow fever are not dreaded now with the terror that formerly filled the hearts of the people in every community when the approach of these maladies was announced. Even the more common ailments, diphtheria, scarlet fever, measles, typhoid and other infectious diseases have lost so much of their virulence, that less fear of their ravages is now entertained. The masterly scientific

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work of Jenner, Koch, Pasteur and others enables us to-day to contend successfully with most of the infectious diseases. Only a few years ago many a physician lost his life in the struggle with these diseases which now by means of vaccination, inoculation and the antitoxins are often easily vanquished.

It was not an uncommon occurrence half a century and a century ago for the annual death rate in cities to reach 40 and 50 per thousand. *Now* none but the most filthy have so high a death rate and some of the large cities of the world have reduced the death rate to less than 15 per thousand. What is it that makes this difference between the cities of the old world then and Chicago and other wide awake cities of the new world to-day?

If I were to answer in one word, I should say, *cleanliness*. The reeking filth of the past was the great harbinger of disease and the death angel ever ready to decimate the world with his ghastly work of destruction.

The struggle for cleanliness in surgery, in medicine, in public buildings, in armies, in hospitals, and in the homes of the people, has been the battle heroically waged by the profession during the last half of this wonderful nineteenth century.

The victories won have been famous and life-saving. Aseptic surgery is a reality. Antiseptic medicine is in general favor. The armies of the world are scientifically superintended so that military hygiene is in high repute and the record of military hygiene and surgery in the Spanish-American war will add to the glory of the United States. Public buildings are better cared for, and our hospitals are models of cleanliness and beauty.

Much has been taught and something done to render the homes of the people less open to the ravages of the infectious diseases. How shall contagion be kept from the homes of the masses? Here is the great problem of the future, and the

medical profession must help to solve it. Neither the aristocracy of wealth nor that of education alone will solve it. Republicanism, democracy and socialism alone will be equally impotent to bring about this desirable end. It will require the united efforts of the patronizing instincts of wealth, the broadening and elevating mental characteristics of education, the political equality inculcated by republicanism and democracy, the economic equality of socialism, the spiritual equality of religion and the love of humanity of our noble profession, to lift the dregs of our race from the filth and squalor which endanger the public health. Shall we undertake it?

Surely every worthy member of our beloved profession believes in the brotherhood of man. This belief implies certain principles and entails certain duties and responsibilities. Some of these principles were enunciated by our fathers in the Declaration of Independence as inalienable rights. Another was not stated by them, nor is it contained in the Monroe doctrine (however enthusiastically we love and will fight for that principle), but it is this : Every man has the right to enjoy good health without interference therewith by his neighbors.

These remarks are made as a basis for a plea in behalf of the poor. It is the speaker's opinion that a great work is necessary amongst the poor before medicine shall have reached the accomplishment of its duties and responsibilities to the people.

How shall the State guarantee to every man the right to enjoy good health? The only rational answer to this question is that the State must remove, as far as possible, every means of exposure. One of the most common means of exposure to infectious disease and the spread of the disease is uncleanness. The State should require that every house and household shall be in such good hygienic condition that no



charge of fostering disease can be laid to their door. The poor must be required to live in such clean apartments and under such favorable conditions that their homes will not be culture beds for malignant disease germs. It is a well known fact that while malignant acute infectious diseases may spread into the most cleanly and well-ordered houses, they generally originate among the very poor and unclean.

That the State can interfere in this matter in a practical way and in a large measure eliminate this cause of infectious diseases is the proposition I wish here to maintain. In the discussion of this question it is proper first to state what is necessary to be done, second what has been done, third what remains to be accomplished, and lastly to suggest some method by which the end we seek can be attained.

*First.* It may be briefly stated that everything about a house should be clean, and closets and plumbing should be kept in good order. All refuse material and garbage, so far as possible, should be burned, and bathing of the body ought to be encouraged. Drainage ought to be perfect and drainage pipes washed sufficiently often to keep them clean. Every house must be well ventilated, including ventilation of the basement or cellar. In the country and in villages the custom of banking up the foundations of houses with manure from the cow stable and horse barn must be prohibited, and other means of protection from the cold adopted. In cold weather some means of ventilation in the houses of the poor should be prescribed which will allow the air to be warmed before it is admitted into the room, or some arrangement ought to be adopted by which it may pass around the stove before it enters the living apartments. Careful medical surveillance of homes invaded by contagious diseases must be persistently enforced to prevent the spreading of such diseases from these centers of infection. The fearful ravages of the

epidemics and endemics of infectious diseases in the past have taught us that self-protection demands that we shall act as our brother's keeper whether we have accepted the moral obligation of that teaching or not.

*Second.* What has been done to correct these conditions and remove these causes of disease? It is with pride we can say that in the main our American cities are cleaner and more wholesome than the average European and Asiatic cities. The death rate has been materially reduced in New York, Chicago, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Cincinnati and other American cities. The commissioners of health in some of our larger cities deserve great credit for their professional devotion to this department of preventive medicine and the faithful discharge of their onerous duties to the public. The introduction of better methods of treatment, including the antiseptics and antitoxines, has greatly reduced the ravages of these diseases.

*Third.* What remains to be done? It is of inestimable value that methods of treatment have been discovered which cut the disease short in some instances and methods of inoculation found which remove the susceptibility to the disease in others; and we do not undervalue the vast importance attached to burning or otherwise totally destroying garbage.

However, a still more important matter in many instances is that which relates to the individual, to his manner of life, and to the home in which he lodges. All of the important work which has been done, inoculation, correcting water supplies, superintending drainage and burning garbage, etc., must be continued with unabated fervor; but in addition to that the individual's body and the house within which he resides must be kept clean.

*Fourth.* How shall this desirable end be reached? As this question deals directly with the very poor, a subject which

would require much time and labor fully to present, we may begin our discussion by stating our conclusions. There are two problems to be solved : 1. How shall we give our poor better houses? 2. How shall we supply the poor with proper facilities for bathing?

A careful survey of the field before us will surely convince us that if pestilence is to be driven from our communities, the cause of that pestilence must be removed. How are the poor to remove the conditions which are the result in large part of their poverty? They cannot do it. Then in self defense the people must undertake the work. By charitable contributions? No. One of the evils of our day is a mis-directed charity. As a general principle, food, clothing, fuel and the necessities of life ought not to be given without compensation. This, of course, does not refer to the sick and unfortunate who cannot work. Every one who can work, however, ought to earn his bread. It is a well-known fact that a condition of idleness is unhygienic and that a man continuously unemployed cannot enjoy perfect health.

He ought to have some kind of work, at some rate of wages, so he can pay some price for the food and clothing he requires.

Furthermore, it is greater philanthropy to help men and women to earn a living than it is to feed them gratuitously. Not only that, but most men and women prefer to work and earn their daily bread. There is no doubt that the wholesale method of feeding beggars at the door has encouraged the large army of tramps in our country to continue in the business of traveling from town to town begging food. This class of men must try to reach some large city for protection during the cold weather, hence the great increase of charity hangers-on in some of our cities in winter.

However, there are good and honest people who stay at

home and try to get work who sometimes become objects of charity. Their homes are poor, their clothing is ragged ; they have no fuel nor food and live without bathing. What is to be done for these ? They must be clothed and fed and they must have fuel.

Help must come from those who have the means. The man of large means who invests his capital in some manufacturing enterprise and thereby gives large numbers of men employment is a public benefactor ; and to those who are employed and saved from suffering, he is a personal protector. But these benefactors are few when compared with the poor of the nation, and if we are to be protected from the evils we are now considering, it will require governmental aid.

It would be impossible in a brief address to set forth in detail the manner in which this may be done or the extent to which it might be proper to push such an undertaking. Indeed, my chief object to-night is to show that a responsibility, almost an emergency, exists in the field of preventive medicine and that this responsibility rests upon the State ; but I do not expect to be able to present more than an outline of what seems to me to be a partial possible solution of the problem before us.

The following propositions will express our ideas of what is required :

1. The State or municipality should give men who cannot secure other work some kind of employment which will afford them a living.

- 2 This may be done by introducing such public improvements as will add to the comfort of the people or otherwise benefit them or enhance the value of property.

3. A minimum rate of wages should be paid so that only those who cannot find work elsewhere would seek such employment.

4. All able-bodied men without work, who have no visible means of support and who do not apply for such government employment, should be subject to draft for this labor.

5. The unfortunate and disabled poor should be cared for as wards of the State. Religion, humanity and civilization demand this.

6. The State should see that the poor are properly or comfortably domiciled, in houses provided with good ventilation, supplied with good water and sufficiently warm. If possible houses should be furnished with bathrooms.

7. Inspection of the homes of all the people should be conducted regularly and thoroughly, whether in public or private houses; the object of this inspection being to see that they are in good sanitary condition.

8. All foods put upon the market—meats, vegetables, fruits, dairy products, milk, manufactured products, etc.—should be inspected as to their source, composition and present condition.

9. Public baths should be established where the poor can have facilities for bathing, free or at a nominal cost.

10. These provisions should be enforced under conditions which will not interfere with the freedom of a liberty loving people.

Many arguments might be advanced to maintain the first proposition here presented; but we shall claim it as a matter of justice and self defense,—justice to the poor and self defense on the part of society. We say this is a matter of justice because it would be unfair to require conditions of men which for lack of work they are unable to meet; and without proper food and raiment these people cannot meet the first requisite in the struggle to keep well. Such charities as here suggested—helping a man to help himself—will eventuate in greater

good to a greater number, than is accomplished by many misguided efforts at benevolence. It is only an act of justice to give the unemployed some occupation, because we must require of them conditions of life which demand the expenditure of money; but the poor have no money if without work, so they must be supplied by the public; and we believe the only money which should be given to a healthy person is that which is earned by labor.

However, it is not simply a question of the interest of the individual who receives the money, the community interest is to be considered. The element of self defense is a prominent phase of this question. The law of self-defense is as surely a right of society as of individuals. Society has the right to protect itself against war and pestilence, or any other menace, even the menace lurking in expectorated tuberculous matter and tobacco juice.

The great enemy we have to fear is disease. We are not in danger of being overrun by an Alexander, a Cæsar or a Napoleon. The Indian outbreaks on the frontier have ceased to disturb our rest. Indeed the life and death struggle of our Cuban neighbors scarcely aroused us from our dream of peace, still when we were aroused we leaped to our guns in a spirit of loyal self-defense. However, the spectre of an epidemic of infectious disease fills us with alarm and sends us flying from the field of action. We have a right, then, to enforce conditions which will protect us to a greater or less extent from the causes of epidemics. Having the right to compel individual families to be clean, it is but fair that we should furnish the means to those who have them not. This self defense is of as much interest to the poor as to the rich, for love is as strong in the hut as in the mansion. The mother who is unable properly to feed her child, experiences just as great

anguish when it suffers with disease, as the mother who knows not what it is to be without luxuries. Hence the poor cannot look upon conditions as hard, which will help to protect their own households.

What employment shall be given to these people? I cannot enter upon a discussion of this phase of our subject, but I may offer a suggestion that for a time, at least, street and alley paving, cleaning and repairing, removal of garbage (for burning) and waste matter of all kinds in cities and towns will furnish occupation for some, and the beautifying of the municipality with public works will give work to others. Road building and repairing are legitimate fields of labor in the country.

Another means of relieving the sufferings of the poor by furnishing them employment, and in a measure giving them food, may be found in the cultivation of waste places and unoccupied areas of land—making garden spots, as it were—in cities and villages. These areas may be leased or rented by the government or local civil authorities for this purpose. Only nominal rent need be paid in most instances, and often the use would be given cheerfully by charitably disposed owners.

Flower gardens, local parks and vegetable gardens might be located in such places, according to the vicinity in which the space is found. A little thought given to this matter will enable us to see that between beauty and utility lies a vast field in which labor may be wisely bestowed on neglected and ordinarily useless pieces of vacant ground and great benefit be brought to unemployed citizens and deserving poor. If time could permit we might mention other means of employment. We may remember, in this connection, that the law of supply and demand has this as one of its features: A supply creates

a demand, and a demand finds a supply. Very little more money would be required for this than for other methods of benevolence, the raising of money would be more evenly distributed, all who need help would receive it, and the demands of hygienic living could be more perfectly carried out.

The proposition that only minimum wages must be paid is based first upon a need for economy on the part of the State or municipality, and second, upon the opinion that people should not be encouraged to be constantly depending upon government employ for a living. It is to be borne in mind that the government should open these avenues of employment, not as a matter of business or to compete with private enterprises, but primarily to give its citizens occupation, and secondarily, though more important, to keep the community in better health.

If it is advisable to give employment to those with no occupation the State must have the right to enforce labor. The right to draft into this service is no greater burden than that of drafting for military duty. Further, if there are those who desire to eat the bread of idleness at the risk of being unjust to their neighbors or becoming a source of danger to the community, then the principle of self defense may be invoked to justify drafting such persons.

The speaker believes that the great majority of the poor and unemployed would prefer to earn their bread by honest toil than to be fed upon the charities of their fellowmen, and that drafting would seldom need to be enforced.

The importance of the health of the people in the community is so great that the State has the right or should have the right to inspect homes and tenement houses to see that they are kept in good sanitary condition, and this inspection should be conducted at such intervals as will give a sufficient guaranty that the precincts are in wholesome condition..



In reference to public baths it may be said that the health of the people can be materially benefitted and the progress of preventive medicine greatly aided by the establishment of houses where the poor and those who are not provided with bathing conveniences may enjoy the luxury and the hygienic necessity of bathing, at a nominal cost or entirely free of expense.

Another feature of preventive medicine of the greatest importance is the prohibition of the marriage of diseased individuals. The physician cannot struggle successfully with this problem single handed. The State must stand as the guardian of its people, prospective as well as present. Disease will not be successfully controlled until marriages of consumptives, syphilitics and those suffering from other constitutional diseases are prevented by law.

How shall the legislation be accomplished which will bring about these desirable results? By the influence of intelligent citizens, the members of the medical profession and their friends. The day has passed when physicians might be excused for not using their influence for the securing of proper legislation. Physicians must be men and citizens and let their influence be *felt*.

Who has more at heart the welfare of the poor and who can do more for them in legislative halls than the physician? No one. Who is the butt of sarcasm and of ill-tempered jest upon the witness stand? *The physician who wields no political influence.* Let us wake up then and assert our rights of citizenship; and our influence in behalf of the poor and our efforts to prevent disease will be felt by legislators, and the laws we need to aid us may be enacted.

Already the light of the twentieth century begins to *streak* the eastern horizon and we look with anxious and longing

eyes for its fuller dawn and for its rising sun. In that bright new day we shall hope to see the noble physician's ideal of man—an intelligent mind and a loving heart in a healthy body. In the grand procession of humanity to this high ideal, this realization of the perfection and brotherhood of man, the medical profession should lead the van.





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